



# News Release

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## **Drinking Water Week awards celebrate those who provide safe water**

**OLYMPIA** — Responding to vandalism or making sure bacteria doesn't get into tap water, Washington's drinking water professionals face challenges every day in providing safe, reliable drinking water to the five million of us on public water systems. The Washington State Department of Health will recognize several of these outstanding individuals and organizations for their efforts during National Drinking Water Week, May 3-9.

"Drinking water is essential to our daily lives, and keeping it safe is a round-the-clock task," said Denise Clifford, director of the state Health Department's Office of Drinking Water.

"During National Drinking Water Week we're honoring five outstanding individuals and organizations; all have done a great job of keeping water safe to drink and responding quickly when an emergency occurred," said Clifford. "People in these communities should feel confident and proud of the quality of water coming out of their taps."

## **Drug Abuse Prevention Center, Cowlitz County – "Grace under Pressure"**

The Drug Abuse Prevention Center's well and reservoir were intentionally contaminated by an unknown intruder on Memorial Day weekend last year. The Center immediately brought in bottled water and portable toilets and showers, then set about to correct the problem. Its staff worked with the Cowlitz County Health Department and Sheriff's Office, the state Department of Health and other state offices to protect the health of clients and staff—all while maintaining the integrity of a criminal investigation. On Monday, May 4, the Center will receive the "Grace under Pressure" award to recognize how well it handled the many aspects of this emergency. The award presentation will be at the Center, 2232 S. Silver Lake Road, Castle Rock.

**Brad Lake and Sean Bauer, City of Kent – “Friends of Drinking Water”**

Brad Lake and Sean Bauer have shown exceptional commitment to providing safe and reliable drinking water to customers in the City of Kent and neighboring water systems. As water superintendent, Lake made sure Kent’s water system operators offered their services to neighboring systems. He devoted his own time to help resolve their water issues and to develop regional planning groups. Bauer, Kent’s water quality supervisor, has also found ways to improve neighboring systems. He is on a state advisory committee for operator certification.

The award will be presented Tuesday, May 5, during a meeting of the Kent City Council. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at Kent City Hall, 220 Fourth Ave. S., Kent.

**Cary Eller, Chelan County – “Operator of the Year”**

Cary Eller, water quality program coordinator for the Chelan County Public Utility District, is this year’s “Operator of the Year.” Eller manages 12 water systems in Chelan, Douglas, and Grant counties. He has taken on systems with no operators and those with challenging problems such as arsenic. Eller earns praise for being conscientious and effective, and focusing on preventing rather than reacting to problems. The award presentation will be at 6 p.m. Thursday, May 7, at the Chelan County PUD Auditorium, 327 N. Wenatchee Ave., Wenatchee.

**Port of Walla Walla, Burbank Business Park Water System – “Going Above and Beyond”**

The Port of Walla Walla is being recognized for “Going Above and Beyond” in developing the Burbank Business Park Water System. The Port embarked on a \$3.5 million project to build a central water system for the business park and its neighbors, which helped eliminate individual wells. The Port now supplies water to the Columbia School District, which allowed the district to stop using nitrate-contaminated wells. The Port also plans to provide a better water source for the 100 residential customers of the Columbia View Water System in Burbank.

The award presentation is scheduled at 10 a.m. Friday, May 8, at the Burbank Business Park, 366 Fifth Ave., Burbank.

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